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Lost National Ships.

Our navy, as at present organized, dates from the year 1794, and it is perhaps not a little curious that one of its first prizes should have been the first vessel lost without any one being able to say how she was lost. In 1799 the frigate Constellation, then under the command of Captain Truxton, captured the French frigate l'Insurgente, after a very gallant action. This was during what was called the *quasi* war with France, caused by the depredations that were made upon our commerce by the cruisers of that country, which we very properly resented. The prize was taken into the navy, and was first commanded by Captain Murray, who was succeeded by Captain Fletcher. The latter officer sailed on a cruise in July 1800, with a sort of roving commission. Some letters were received from persons on board of her, sent in by vessels that she spoke; but, though she was to have been absent only eight weeks, nothing has ever been seen of her for almost four-and-fifty years. The Pickering, Capt. Hillar, a 14 gun vessel which sailed a month later than the Insurgente for the West Inddies, was never heard from again. The Saratoga, of 16 guns, was lost in the same way in 1807.

One of the finest vessels that ever sailed from this country was the sloop-of-war Wasp, which left Portsmouth, N. H., in 1814, under the command of Capt. Blakely. On the 24th of June she captured and destroyed the British sloop-of-war Reindeer, and on the first of September the Avon, a vessel of the same class. One of her prizes was taken on the 21st of September and sent to America, under command of Mr. Geisinger, and no direct intelligence was ever afterwards received from her. She was spoken by a Swedish brig on the 9th of October, out of which she took two American officers who had belonged to the frigate Essex and were passengers in the Swede from Rio de Janeiro. This was the last time that she was seen and known. Various stories as to her fate were current for years. Mr. Cooper says:

"There is only one rumor in reference to this ship that has any appearance of probability. It is said that two English frigates chased an American sloop-of-war, off the southern coast, about the time the Wasp ought to have arrived, and that the three ships were struck with a heavy squall, in which the sloop-of-war suddenly disappeared."

The Wasp was uncommonly well manned and officered, and her loss was a severe one to the navy. Capt. Blakely was an admirable commander, and the gentlemen under him were of high merit. Two of the Lieutenants, Mr. Reilly and Mr. Baury, had taken part in the capture of the Guerriere and the Java, and another, Mr. Tillinghast, was an officer on board the Enterprise when she took the Boxer.

The brig Epervier, 18 guns, sailed from the Mediterranean for the U. S. in 1815, and was never heard from after she passed the straits of Gibraltar. She had been taken from the English, in 1814, by the Peacock, Captain Warrington. We believe at the time of her loss she was commanded by one of the Shubricks, an historical name in our navy.

The most remarkable instance of the loss of a national ship, since the close of the last war with England, was that of the Hornet, which is supposed to have foundered in a "norther" in the Gulf of Mexico, about a quarter of a century ago. Nothing was heard of her, if we remember, after she left Tampico, some time in the year 1830. The Hornet was one of the "lucky ships" of the navy, and a great favorite both with the service and with the country, and was distinguished for the part which she took in the war of 1812, capturing every thing with which she fought, and escaping from superior vessels. In 1813, when commanded by Captain Lawrence, she took the British brig Peacock, after a short but very warm action of fifteen minutes, the Peacock being sunk. Attached to Commodore Decatur's squadron, a few months later, she was compelled to take refuge in New London, when that squadron fell in with a greatly superior British force, where she was blockaded for a long time. Escaping from New London, she went to sea in January, 1815, under command of Captain Biddle. On the 23d of March she engaged and captured the Penguin, a British vessel of about her own size, and with a picked crew. Subsequently she was chased for two or three days by a British seventy-four, and narrowly escaped being captured.

The recent losses of the Albany and the Porpoise have revived the interest that used to be felt in the losses that we have mentioned above. It will be seen that it is no new thing in our navy for vessels to disappear, leaving no trace of their fate, and the same remark applies to all navies.—[Boston Chronicle.

The Slate Quarries of Vermont.—On the traveled highway between Greenfield, Mass., and Brattleboro, Vt., in the town of Guilford in the latter state, are extensive quarries of slate, of which a brief notice will be interesting to our readers. They lie upon both sides of the road, and rise to a height of more than one hundred feet. The strata are very regular, having a direction north, 5 deg. east, and a dip from 70 to 75 deg. west, or 15 to 20 deg. from a perpendicular direction. The quantity of slate in this deposit is inexhaustible. It covers an area of more than 400 acres, and presents a face 20 to 120 feet from below, upward, without going down to the level of the road-bed, and after leaving a sufficient fall for drainage and the dumping of the waste material. The slate obtained here is of a dark blue color, and exceedingly durable. As is well known, the durability of slate is governed chiefly by its power to resist the absorption of water, and in this particular the Guilford slate stands pre-eminent. More than one hundred men are now employed in getting out slate, and the business is constantly increasing. The slate is removed from the quarries in large blocks by means of drills and crow-bars, and in some cases by blasting. These blocks are split into pieces of a size convenient for removal by hand, and wheeled to the buildings where the further processes of manufacture are carried forward to completion. Formerly the process of cutting slate was performed by hand, but it is now performed by machinery, whereby a large saving is made, and the work is accomplished in a better manner than it was by hand. Fifteen machines are now in operation, which cut about fifty squares of slate per day. Possessing the elevation and dip it does, it will readily be seen that the slate can be quarried with the greatest facility, but little expense for drainage and none for shafts being necessary. The layers are uniform, and slate of any required dimensions can be obtained without difficulty.—The quarries are within about two miles of the Vermont and Massachusetts railroad; of course they are easy of access. They belong to the "New England mining and quarrying company."—[Tribune.

The Mississippi papers state as a fact that showers of brimstone have fallen in that state within the last two weeks, and it has been dried and proved to be genuine. No doubt of it. A state that repudiates her debts, owns "niggers," and talks chivalrously about dissolving the Union, must not be far from the place where brimstone is supposed to be the chief article of consumption. —[San. Register.

While mutton, the most nutritive of animal food contains only 26 per cent. of nutritive matter to 74 pounds of water—wheat flour contains 90 per cent. of nutriment to 10 of water, and corn meal 91 per cent. of nutriment to 9 of water. Potatoes, on the other hand, contain but 22½ per cent. of nutriment to 77½ of water; and turnips contain but 4½ per cent. of nutriment to 95½ of water. Cabbage is but a little more nutritious containing but 7½ per cent. of nutriment. The most nutritious of vegetable food, however, is the white bean, which yields 95 per cent. of nutriment to 5 pounds of water. Of the fruits, the cucumber is the least nutritious, and plumbs the most.—Fish are the least nutritious of animal food. It thus appears that the most nutritious, and of course the cheapest, food for man is: Meats—mutton, beef and poultry; vegetable substances—flour, bread, meal, beans and rice.

The Art of Conversation.—In a notice of a model school, a writer says: "An hour each day is devoted to the art of conversation, and it is thus the aim of the instructors to lead the pupils in a familiar way to a knowledge of general topics, science, arts, history, commercial transactions, the amenities of social life, etc., in order that they may be able to converse intelligently, correctly, and readily on such topics in their intercourse with society." This is a thought worthy the attention of every teacher.—Teach your pupils to communicate what they know, readily and correctly, by conversation.

Good Humor.—Keep in good humor. It is not great calamities that embitter existence, it is the petty vexations, the small jealousies, the little disappointments, the "minor miseries," that make the heart heavy and the temper sour. Don't let them.—Anger is a pure waste of vitality. It helps nobody, and hinders everybody. It is always foolish, and always disgraceful, except in some rare cases when it is kindled by seeing wrong done to another; and even that "noble rage" seldom mends the matter. Keep in good humor.

No man does his best except when he is cheerful. A light heart makes nimble hands and keeps the mind free and alert. No misfortune is so great as one that sours the temper. Till cheerfulness is lost, nothing is lost. Keep in good humor.

The company of a good-humored man is a perpetual feast. He is welcome everywhere. Eyes glisten at his approach, and difficulties vanish in his cheering presence. Franklin's indomitable good humor did as much for his country in the old congress as Adams's fire or Jefferson's wisdom. He clothed wisdom with smiles and softened contentious minds into acquiescence. Keep in a good humor.

A good conscience, a sound stomach, and a clean skin are the elements of good humor. Get them, keep them, and keep in good humor.

Dr. Hall, in his medical journal, asserts that one great cause of dyspepsia in ministers is eating too soon after preaching. For two or three hours the tide of nervous energy has been strongly setting towards the brain, and it cannot be suddenly turned towards the stomach; but the mental effort has occasioned a feeling of faintness or debility about the stomach, and a morbid appetite; and if food is taken in at all largely, there is not the nervous energy there requisite to effect its digestion, for the brain will be running over the discourse.

An Aberdeen paper says that while the prayer book, with all the clothing of a deceased cholera patient, were carefully burned, six £1 notes, found on his person, were religiously preserved.